

VII. TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Missouri did achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. Information pertaining to the items assessed for this factor is provided below.

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength because the CFSR determined that the State operates a comprehensive initial training program for new staff. However, CFSR findings also indicate that because of staff shortages, children's service workers in some areas of the State carry cases prior to completion of training, and because of budgets cuts, there has been no training for new supervisors in recent years.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD's Staff Training and Development Unit provides training to various staff throughout the State. The Child Welfare Practice Basic Orientation training is a competency-based curriculum provided to all new children's service workers. This training also is given to contracted agency staff members who provide case management services. The Statewide Assessment notes that this pre-service training is required. It takes place during the first 3 months of employment and includes 129 hours of classroom training. The curriculum addresses: principles of family-centered practice; CAN investigations, assessments, and treatment planning; permanency and out-of-home care; and systems training. Training in Jackson County, which is governed by the Consent Decree, is the same as the State-based training. At the outset of Basic Orientation training, newly hired staff members attend a 1-week classroom session in a central location. This is followed by approximately 1 week of on-the-job training in the field office, which is overseen by supervisors. The Statewide Assessment reports that the quality of on-the-job training varies and needs to be more consistent throughout the State.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that Basic Orientation training is provided six times per year, with up to three sessions occurring simultaneously to accommodate newly-hired staff. However, due to current staff shortages across the State, children's service workers in some circuits carry cases prior to the completion of training, although this is not permitted in Jackson County. Under the Consent Decree, Jackson County children's service workers must complete training prior to carrying a caseload.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that training for new supervisors has been on hold because there is insufficient money in the budget to pay for the training. However, the Jackson County Consent Decree also requires that new supervisors in that county must receive training on a regular basis.

Many stakeholders commenting on the area of training during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State provides effective competency-based training to new children's service workers. However, some stakeholders observed that the training does not adequately prepare staff to do their jobs and is generally too generic. State-level stakeholders voiced concern that agency children's service workers are not credentialed and that the State does not require a Bachelor's degree in Social Work in order to be licensed.

State-level stakeholders reported that in some areas of the State, workers assume a full caseload before completing pre-service training. St. Louis stakeholders said that children's service workers often begin with a full caseload and that all supervisor training has been eliminated. However, Jackson County stakeholders noted that children's service workers in that county do not carry a caseload prior to completing training, because that would be a violation of the Consent Decree.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

____ Strength __X__ Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the CFSR found that ongoing training is not provided to all agency staff (both supervisors and direct service providers) statewide.

According to the Statewide Assessment, limited ongoing training is offered to all staff that have completed Basic Orientation training. The agency provides in-service training for frontline children's service workers and supervisors that is based on identified needs and/or policy changes. Although training sessions are offered each year, CD has not established an ongoing, in-service curriculum and does not require ongoing training statewide. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Consent Decree in Jackson County requires that children's service workers, supervisors, and managers attend 30 hours of in-service training after their second year on the job. In addition, children's service workers who conduct child abuse and neglect investigations are required by State statute to participate in 20 hours of ongoing, in-service training each year.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, CD currently is developing a competency-based, 2-year curriculum for staff, which will include the initial in-service training and advanced, ongoing core curricula. There are several initiatives underway to develop a statewide, clinically-based curriculum to meet the training needs of CD supervisors. The State also has identified a need for a statewide training advisory committee to assess training needs and a system to evaluate training.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR expressed concern regarding the lack of ongoing training for staff on a statewide basis. Stakeholders in Jasper and St. Louis Counties indicated that in-service training is not readily available and there is little funding for it. These stakeholders noted that children's service workers who are interested generally have to seek free training opportunities on their own.

In contrast, Jackson County stakeholders noted that child welfare agency staff members in that locality receive regular, ongoing training, as mandated by the Consent Decree and also have direct input into the training curriculum. It was noted that this situation does not occur in other locations in the State.

State-level stakeholders suggested that the lack of strong ongoing training efforts may contribute to the high rate of worker turnover and therefore the area of ongoing training should be strengthened. State-level stakeholders noted that supervisors are in need of

ongoing training in order to support and guide children's service workers, and they expressed concern that supervisor training has been on hold for more than two years. Stakeholders also reported that there is no formal, statewide system to assess training needs and measure the effectiveness of training.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 was rated as a Strength because CFSR findings indicate that the State provides pre-service and ongoing training for all current and prospective foster and adoptive parents.

According to the Statewide Assessment, State legislation mandates that foster parents receive pre-service training before a foster home license can be issued. Prospective foster/adopt families must successfully complete 27 hours of pre-service training. Prospective adoptive families must successfully complete an additional 12 hours of training. The STARS curriculum is used for foster/adoptive parent training and adoptive parents receive training developed by Spaulding. Kinship caregivers also are required to complete a condensed version of STARS training to become licensed, and to participate in 15 hours of in-service training each year.

The Statewide Assessment notes that licensed foster parents (both relative and non-relative) are required to complete 30 hours of additional training during the 2-year licensing period. There are additional training requirements for behavioral, medical, and career-level foster parents. Behavioral foster parents receive 12 hours of training, using the "*People Places*" curriculum. Training for medical foster parents is coordinated with the child's physician and is tailored to meet the individual child's needs. Career parents are required to take the "*People Places*" training and at least 4 additional hours of training each year. At the time of licensure and re-licensure, a Family Development Plan is prepared by the worker and foster parents. This plan addresses areas of ongoing knowledge and skill development. The agency provides foster parents with day care and reimbursement for mileage while they attend training.

Residential care staff are required to attend at least 40 hours of training each year. The Residential Care agency is required to document the dates, locations, training subjects, and the name of the person(s) who conducted the training. Verification of training is conducted at the supervisory or licensing renewal meeting with the Residential Licensing Consultants.

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that the agency provides high quality pre-service training to foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship caregivers, and residential care staff. While observing that the initial training is beneficial, they noted that caregivers are in need of supplementary and/or specialized training to address the complex needs of children in their care (e.g., mental health issues, dealing with older youth). Stakeholders noted that ongoing training is not readily available due to lack of resources (i.e., funding, staff, and time). As a result, many caregivers seek opportunities in the community to meet their need for more specialized training (e.g., sexual abuse, ADHD, methamphetamine abuse). Local and state support groups also facilitate access to training for foster parents.

State-level stakeholders reported that although budget cuts have impacted the quantity and quality of ongoing training across Missouri, training is available and accessible in metropolitan areas and is offered at flexible times and locations in urban centers. State-level stakeholders noted, however, that pre-service and in-service training opportunities are very limited in rural areas. There is little funding available to bring trainers to rural areas or to pay for foster parents to go outside the area. In addition, in some areas of the State, STARS training is not readily available so that potential foster parents are put on waiting lists until the training is provided.

State-level stakeholders reported it is the State's expectation that contractors providing training will use experienced foster parents as co-trainers. However, several stakeholders expressed concern that this is not happening on a consistent basis. Stakeholders also suggested that the content of the training relevant to the CD was inadequate.